

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A water-based composition comprising:

(A) at least one chitosan or chitosan derivative, and

(B) a metal compound comprising at least one metal selected from the group consisting of Ti, Zr, Hf, Mo, W, Se, Ce, Fe, Cu, Zn, V and trivalent Cr,

wherein when (B) is Cu or Zn, then (A) is a chitosan derivative.

Claim 2 (Previously Presented): The water-based composition according to claim 1, which is formulated for application to a metal material.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The water-based composition according to claim 1, wherein said chitosan derivative is at least one of chitosan, carboxymethylchitosan, a cationized chitosan, a glycerated chitosan, and a hydroxyalkylchitosan[[,]]; or a salt thereof.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The water-based composition according to claim 1, which comprises glycerylated chitosan or a salt thereof, or both.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The water-based composition according to claim 1, wherein said metal compound (B) ~~comprises trivalent Cr, Ti, Zr, V, Mo or Ce~~ is a metal compound comprising at least one metal selected from the group consisting of trivalent Cr, Ti, Zr, V, Mo and Ce.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The water-based composition according to claim 1, further comprising:

(C) an organic compound comprising at least one carboxyl group in a molecule thereof.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): A method comprising:  
coating a material, which is to be treated, at a surface thereof with the water-based composition of claim 1,  
optionally rinsing the surface of the material with water subsequent to said coating,  
and  
heating and drying said material in a temperature range of from 80°C to 300°C.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 7, wherein said material to be treated is a metal.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 7,  
wherein a dry coat weight of said chitosan (A) to said surface of said treated material is in a range of from 1 to 500 mg/m<sup>2</sup> calculated as chitosan, and  
a dry coat weight of said metal compound (B) to said surface of said treated material is in a range of from 1 to 500 mg/m<sup>2</sup> calculated as said metal.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): A metal material treated by the method according to claim 7.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): The metal material according to claim 10, which [[is]] is aluminum, magnesium, copper, iron, zinc, nickel, or an alloy thereof.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 7, wherein said material is aluminum, magnesium, copper, iron, zinc, nickel, or an alloy thereof.

Claim 13 (New): A water-based composition comprising:

(A) at least one chitosan derivative, and

(B) a metal compound comprising at least one metal selected from the group consisting of Ti, Zr, Hf, Mo, W, Se, Ce, Fe, Cu, Zn, V and trivalent Cr.

Claim 14 (New): The water-based composition of Claim 13, wherein (A) is a cationized chitosan or a salt thereof.

Claim 15 (New): The water-based composition of Claim 13, wherein (A) is selected from the group consisting of at least one of a carboxymethylchitosan, a hydroxyalkylchitosan and a glycerated chitosan; or a salt thereof.

Claim 16 (New): The water-based composition of Claim 13, wherein (B) is selected from the group consisting of at least one of Ti, Zr, Hf, Mo, W, Se, Ce, Fe, V and trivalent Cr.

Claim 17 (New): The water-based composition of Claim 13, wherein (B) is selected from the group consisting of at least one of Cu and Zn.

Claim 18 (New): A coated metal comprising:

a metal substrate, and

a coating; wherein said coating has been formed by applying to said metal substrate a water-based composition comprising:

(A) at least one chitosan or chitosan derivative, and

(B) a metal compound comprising at least one metal selected from the group consisting of Ti, Zr, Hf, Mo, W, Se, Ce, Fe, Cu, Zn, V and trivalent Cr.